GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1715
ANSWERED ON:04.05.2016
Women Participation in Scientific Research and Development
Gandhi Shri Feroze Varun

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the participation of women in Scientific Research and Development (R&D) in the Department and its various institutes is less;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to address this gender gap in Scientific R&D;

(c) the manner in which the new programme, Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing (KIRAN), being implemented, is different from the erstwhile DISHA;

(d) the extent to which DISHA programme had addressed the gender gap in Scientific R&D;

(e) the details of the budgetary allocation and expenditure incurred during the complete period of DISHA and proposed expenditure for the programme KIRAN; and

(f) the type of institutional support provided by the Ministry to schools and universities?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI Y.S. CHOWDARY)

(a) Yes, Madam.

(b) Department of Science And Technology (DST) initiated exclusive schemes to enable women to pursue a career in Research and Development (R&D) in Science and Technology (S&T) only in the year 2002. Before that sporadic attempts had been made in this direction and hence only a few women were engaged in R&D in mainstream science. One of the major reasons for this anomaly leading to gender gap in scientific R&D was the break in career that many women had to face due to familial compulsions like marriage, child birth, looking after old or ailing parents, children"s education and so on. Subsequently, DST launched DISHA Programme for Women in Science to address these issues and made focused efforts to not only facilitate the re-entry of such women to mainstream science by offering them opportunities to pursue R&D, take up projects having distinct societal impact and explore a career in Intellectual Property domain.

(c) Over the years, the programmes initiated by DST under Disha Programme for Women in Science, gathered momentum. DST also got better insights into various issues and challenges that women faced and made necessary adjustments to address these. Thus in the year 2014, DST restructured the women specific programmes under one umbrella called "KIRAN (Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing)". Through KIRAN, DST is not only addressing various issues related to women scientists (unemployment, break-in career, relocation, etc.) but is also aimed at providing opportunities in research, entrepreneurship, science communication, technology development/demonstration and self-employment. In addition, Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in women universities (CURIE) is another component of KIRAN that has a focus to develop state-of-the-art infrastructure to help large number of women to enhance their S&T skills and knowledge in order to make a fulfilling career in this domain besides promoting research culture in such institutions. Further, KIRAN is providing budgetary support for creating Women Technology Park (WTP) where appropriate S&T packages for women are developed to improve livelihood and health & nutrition besides reducing drudgery in order to enhance their quality-of-life. KIRAN is thus different in many ways from Disha as it has more holistic approach and inclusiveness and gives more career options to women through new components, namely mobility as well as training in science communication, entrepreneurship, and leadership.

(d) Disha was focused primarily on gender mainstreaming and approx 500 women scientists got benefitted through this and entered in mainstream science in two years of its operations.

(e) The budgteray allocation under Disha for two years of its currency as well as KIRAN since its inception (2014-15) is given in the following Table:-

Financial Year Budget Budget utilized Budget Budget utilized
allocation under Disha allocation under KIRAN
under DISHA, Rs.in crores under KIRAN Rs.in crores
Rs.in crores Rs.in crores

2012-13 48 48 - -
2013-14 43 43 - -
2014-15 - - 44 44
2015-16 - - 58 58

(f) Ministry of Science and Technology devised a unique programme "Consolidation of University Research for Innovation and Excellence in Women Universities (CURIE)" in 2009 to provide state-of-the-art infrastructural support to Women Universities in order to strengthen as well as improve academic and research activities. So far, 6 such universities have been given grants-in-aid. KIRAN Scheme is mandated to support women at University level only and does not cater to schools.

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